

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployments of United States
Combat-Equipped Armed Forces**

December 16, 2009

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about global deployments of U.S. Armed Forces equipped for combat. This supplemental report covers ongoing U.S. contingency operations overseas.

Since October 7, 2001, the United States has conducted combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, and has deployed various combat-equipped forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation in support of those and other overseas operations. These operations and deployments remain ongoing and were previously reported consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution.

In response to the terrorist threat, I will direct additional measures, as necessary, in the exercise of the right of the United States to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployments of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous international partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qa'ida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qa'ida. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qa'ida's capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous international partners, brought an end to the Taliban's leadership of Afghanistan. Our forces are actively pursuing and engaging remaining al-Qa'ida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 68,000, of which over 34,000 are assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council authorized ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 on December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently for a 12-month period from October 13, 2009, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1890 on October 8, 2009. The mission of ISAF, under NATO command and in partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, is to conduct population-centric counterinsurgency operations, enable expanded and effective Afghan National Security Forces, and support improved governance and development in order to protect the Afghan people and provide a secure environment for sustainable security. Presently, 43 nations contribute to ISAF, including all 28 NATO Allies.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qa'ida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped forces deployed since January 2002 to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operation, continue to conduct secure detention operations

for the approximately 230 detainees at Guantanamo Bay under Public Law 107–40 and consistent with principles of the law of war.

The U.N. Security Council authorized a Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq, under unified command, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 on October 16, 2003, and reaffirmed its authorization in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 on June 8, 2004, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1637 on November 8, 2005, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1723 on November 28, 2006, and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790 on December 18, 2007; the authorization was not renewed in 2009. Since the expiration of the authorization and mandate for the MNF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790 on December 31, 2008, U.S. forces have continued operations to support Iraq in its efforts to maintain security and stability in Iraq pursuant to the bilateral Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq, which entered into force on January 1, 2009. These contributions have included, but have not been limited to, assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces, supporting the development of Iraq's political institutions, improving local governance, enhancing ministerial capacity, and providing critical humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the Iraqis. The United States contribution of forces to the Iraq mission fluctuates over time, depending on the conditions in theater as determined by the commanders on the ground; the present U.S. contribution is approximately 116,000 U.S. military personnel.

In furtherance of U.S. efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, its friends, its allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe. These efforts include the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped forces to assist in enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of our friends and allies. United States combat-equipped forces continue to be located in the Horn of Africa region.

In addition, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of all of the geographic combatant commands. These maritime operations are aimed at stopping the movement, arming, and financing of international terrorists.

As noted in previous reports regarding U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999. The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, verify, and, when necessary, enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities and, with local authorities and international institutions, contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment.

Currently, 24 NATO Allies contribute to KFOR. Eight non-NATO countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel. The United States contribution to KFOR is about 1,475 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 11 percent of the total strength of approximately 12,500 personnel. The United States forces participating in KFOR have been assigned to the eastern region of Kosovo, but also have operated in other areas of the country based on mission requirements. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, helping to maintain a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement remain the principal military tasks. KFOR operates under NATO command and control and rules of

engagement, and coordinates with and supports the European Union (EU)-led International Civilian Office and the EU Rule of Law Mission, within its means and capabilities. KFOR provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside, and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas to provide security, to protect all segments of Kosovo's population, and to help instill a feeling of confidence across all ethnic communities throughout Kosovo. NATO periodically conducts formal reviews of KFOR's mission. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, and recommendations for adjustments to KFOR's force structure and eventual withdrawal. NATO adopted the Joint Operations Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans.

The Kosovo Police has primary responsibility for public safety and policing throughout Kosovo. KFOR also offers as-needed security assistance in response to civil unrest. KFOR augments security in particularly sensitive areas or in response to particular threats as events on the ground dictate.

In January 2009, the Government of Kosovo established the Kosovo Security Force (KSF). Separately, the Government of Kosovo began the process of dissolving the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). The KSF is a lightly armed, civilian-led security force that provides crisis response, explosive ordnance disposal, and civil protection. The newly formed Ministry for the Kosovo Security Force provides civilian oversight and control for the KSF. KFOR provides technical and policy guidance to the KSF and assists with recruiting for new members, chairing selection boards that identify former KPC members suitable for service in the KSF, supervising NATO standard training programs for new recruits, and coordinating KSF equipment purchases and donations.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Categories: Communications to Congress : U.S. combat-equipped Armed Forces, deployments, letter reporting on.

Subjects: Afghanistan : Afghan military and security forces; Afghanistan : Former regime; Afghanistan : International assistance; Afghanistan : NATO, role; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Service members :: Deployment; Cuba : Guantanamo Bay, U.S. Naval Base, detention of alleged terrorists; Iraq : Democracy efforts; Iraq : Iraqi military and security forces; Iraq : Reconstruction efforts; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Kosovo : KFOR international security force :: International assistance; Kosovo : KFOR international security force :: NATO, role; Kosovo : KFOR international security force :: U.S. military forces, deployment; Kosovo : Kosovo Police; Kosovo : Kosovo Protection Corps; Kosovo : Kosovo Security Force; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Global threat.

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